

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (FL-13) announced today that federal disaster assistance is available for eligible farmers in Florida's 13th District. Sarasota, Manatee, Hardee, DeSoto, and Charlotte counties are among the 24 counties designated for natural disaster assistance by the U.S. Department of Agriculture due to losses caused by cold weather in January and February.

"Bitter cold temperatures took a toll on Florida crops this winter," said Buchanan. "Federal assistance will help compensate growers for their losses and ensure their ability to continue to provide safe and affordable produce to consumers."

The designation makes growers in primary and contiguous counties eligible to be considered for Farm Service Agency emergency loans and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program. Cold snaps occurred from January 20 through January 23 and February 4 through February 6, 2009.